

story of freedom across our country, a civil right now legal in States that seven in ten Americans call home.

So I know the good, and optimistic, and big-hearted generosity of the American people who, every day, live the idea that we are our brother's keeper, and our sister's keeper. And I know they expect those of us who serve here to set a better example.

So the question for those of us here tonight is how we, all of us, can better reflect America's hopes. I've served in Congress with many of you. I know many of you well. There are a lot of good people here, on both sides of the aisle. And many of you have told me that this isn't what you signed up for—arguing past each other on cable shows, the constant fundraising, always looking over your shoulder at how the base will react to every decision.

Imagine if we broke out of these tired old patterns. Imagine if we did something different.

Understand—a better politics isn't one where Democrats abandon their agenda or Republicans simply embrace mine.

A better politics is one where we appeal to each other's basic decency instead of our basest fears.

A better politics is one where we debate without demonizing each other; where we talk issues, and values, and principles, and facts, rather than "gotcha" moments, or trivial gaffes, or fake controversies that have nothing to do with people's daily lives.

A better politics is one where we spend less time drowning in dark money for ads that pull us into the gutter, and spend more time lifting young people up, with a sense of purpose and possibility, and asking them to join in the great mission of building America.

If we're going to have arguments, let's have arguments—but let's make them debates worthy of this body and worthy of this country.

We still may not agree on a woman's right to choose, but surely we can agree it's a good thing that teen pregnancies and abortions are nearing all-time lows, and that every woman should have access to the health care she needs.

Yes, passions still fly on immigration, but surely we can all see something of ourselves in the striving young student, and agree that no one benefits when a hardworking mom is taken from her child, and that it's possible to shape a law that upholds our tradition as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

We may go at it in campaign season, but surely we can agree that the right to vote is sacred; that it's being denied to too many; and that, on this 50th anniversary of the great march from Selma to Montgomery and the passage of the Voting Rights Act, we can come together, Democrats and Republicans, to make voting easier for every single American.

We may have different takes on the events of Ferguson and New York. But surely we can understand a father who fears his son can't walk home without being harassed. Surely we can understand the wife who won't rest until the police officer she married walks through the front door at the end of his shift. Surely we can agree it's a good thing that for the first time in 40 years, the crime rate and the incarceration rate have come down together, and use that as a starting point for Democrats and Republicans, community leaders and law enforcement, to reform America's criminal justice system so that it protects and serves us all.

That's a better politics. That's how we start rebuilding trust. That's how we move this country forward. That's what the American people want. That's what they deserve.

I have no more campaigns to run. My only agenda for the next 2 years is the same as the one I've had since the day I swore an oath on the steps of this Capitol—to do what I believe is best for America. If you share the broad vision I outlined tonight, join me in the work at hand. If you disagree with parts of it, I hope you'll at least work with me where you do agree. And I commit to every Republican here tonight that I will not only seek out your ideas, I will seek to work with you to make this country stronger.

Because I want this chamber, this city, to reflect the truth—that for all our blind spots and shortcomings, we are a people with the strength and generosity of spirit to bridge divides, to unite in common effort, and help our neighbors, whether down the street or on the other side of the world.

I want our actions to tell every child, in every neighborhood: your life matters, and we are as committed to improving your life chances as we are for our own kids.

I want future generations to know that we are a people who see our differences as a great gift, that we are a people who value the dignity and worth of every citizen—man and woman, young and old, black and white, Latino and Asian, immigrant and Native American, gay and straight, Americans with mental illness or physical disability.

I want them to grow up in a country that shows the world what we still know to be true: that we are still more than a collection of red States and blue States; that we are the United States of America.

I want them to grow up in a country where a young mom like Rebekah can sit down and write a letter to her President with a story to sum up these past 6 years:

"It is amazing what you can bounce back from when you have to . . . we are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times."

My fellow Americans, we too are a strong, tight-knit family. We, too, have

made it through some hard times. Fifteen years into this new century, we have picked ourselves up, dusted ourselves off, and begun again the work of remaking America. We've laid a new foundation. A brighter future is ours to write. Let's begin this new chapter—together—and let's start the work right now.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless this country we love.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, January 20, 2015.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 240. An act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-256. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Defense Production Act Annual Fund Report for Fiscal Year 2014"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-257. A communication from the Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program; Limited Liability for Noncoal Reclamation by Certified States and Indian Tribes" ((RIN1029-AC66) (Docket ID OSM-2012-0010)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-258. A communication from the Departmental Privacy Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Privacy Act Regulations; Exemption for the Insider Threat Program" (RIN1090-AB07) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-259. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revisions to Auxiliary Installations, Replacement Facilities, and Siting and Maintenance Regulations" (Docket No. RM12-11-002) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-260. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-261. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law,